

VENETIAN VENTURE

*Avio Linee Inaugurates London-Venice
Service with Fiat G.18-V*

THE assortment of transport aircraft using Croydon has lately been supplemented by the business-like low-wing Fiat G.18, used by Avio Linee Italiane S.A. for its new London-Venice route. The first official flight was made from this country last Wednesday, though a year ago the Paris-Venice connection was introduced with encouraging results. Scheduled times are: Depart Croydon 8.45 a.m., arrive Paris 10 a.m.; depart Paris 10.30 a.m., arrive Turin 1.15 p.m.; depart Turin 1.45 p.m., arrive Milan 2.20 p.m.; depart Milan 2.30 p.m., arrive Venice 3.35 p.m. The initial trip enabled us to get in a leisurely sun bathe and swim from the Excelsior Hotel on the Lido, having left Croydon at the gentlemanly hour of 8.45 a.m.

The Alps are cleared at about 15,500ft., the built-in oxygen system proving a very definite boon. Delivery is through individual leads and regulators from a set of cylinders in the extreme nose of the fuselage. Carefully studied heating and soundproofing (the latter by Dr. Zand, of Sperry's) keep things happy.

The pilots give the G.18-V very high marks, enthusing particularly over its behaviour under ice-forming conditions. The machine is virtually the "speed model" of the G.18, also employed by Avio Linee. The company has six G.18-Vs and four G.18s with Fiat-built Hornets. One of the latter, incidentally, took over at Milan.

The essential difference between the two models is that the "V" type is powered with two fully supercharged Fiat A.80 R.C. eighteen-cylinder radials giving 1,000 h.p. each at 13,500ft. This is the first "eighteen" to go into production; the weight is 1,600 lb.. They are geared 5:8, and drive Fiat-Hamilton c.s. airscrews. The cowlings are of the long-chord Magni variety and starting is effected by a Garelli compressed-air system. No fuselage fuel tanks are fitted (there are eight in the wings, sufficing for a range of 1,025 miles) but smoking is not permitted.

Three-spar wing construction is employed, the wing covering being both smooth metal and fabric. Chrome molybdenum steel tubing is used for the centre section.

The fuselage is flat-bottomed and slab-sided and is divided into a compartment for two pilots and a wireless operator; the passenger cabin (normally with eighteen seats); the toilet, and a luggage compartment extending almost to the tail. We sounded Signor Gabrielli, the

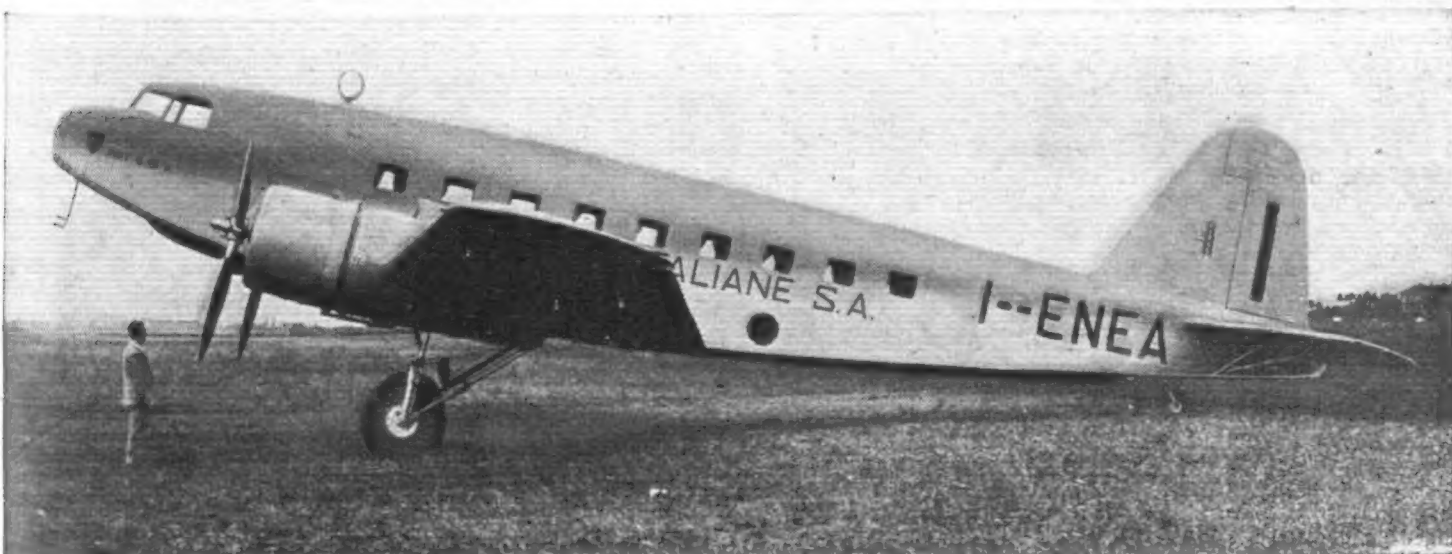


The eighteen-seater cabin of the G.18-V used on the London-Venice route by Avio Linee.

designer, on the design of the fuselage; he referred to N.A.C.A. recommendations relating to the high aerodynamic efficiency and said that the particular shape adopted shows up well in obviating tail buffeting.

Signor Gabrielli, by the way, is very well known among the technical fraternity in this country and is responsible for the design of the Fiat G.50 monoplane fighter now in large-scale production for the Regia Aeronautica. He is firmly of the belief that high wings for transports are highly over-rated, because after the initial thrill of flying a passenger usually goes to sleep or produces a book. Commercial considerations permitting, he would like to design a mid-wing transport.

To return to the trip: the Turin-Milan section offers a



The somewhat unusual fuselage shape of the G.18-V is apparent here. Although the bottom and sides are flat, the top speed is about 250 m.p.h. with two eighteen-cylinder Fiat radials of 1,000 h.p. each.